Toccata and Fugue (Prelude)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/1051484.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Mpreg, Dubious Consent, Canon-Typical Violence, Non-Consensual Drug Use
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Toccata and Fugue
Stats:	Published: 2013-11-19 Words: 11,757 Chapters: 7/7

Toccata and Fugue (Prelude)

by claritylore

Summary

Based on a prompt at the kinkmeme. Hannibal is an Alpha with superhuman control and, despite the need to claim Will gnawing at him, he will not break. He knows that giving in will be the end of him; on some level, he's always known that Will will be the one to catch him, if he reveals himself. But then Will is courted by another male Alpha and, scenting that his heat cycle is approaching and he'll be bonded to someone else if he doesn't act, Hannibal decides to trade his freedom in order to bind Will to him forever...

Chapter 1

His mouth was dry and gritty, his head full of wasps and needles. He tried to move but had to stop and breathe deeply first. Every part if him felt strange and only barely connected.

Slowly, Will prised his eyelids apart. The light was dim but still hurt his eyes at first. He was used to headaches, so the one which crawled up from the base of his skull in response didn't affect him greatly beyond making it hard to keep his eyes open against the brightness.

He was seated, he realised, in a comfortable chair with wide arms and black leather upholstery. One of his hands was stuck to it, like he had been there some time, lightly sweating. Will prised it away and was grateful for the slight shock of sensation it provided. It helped to bring him back to consciousness.

Will made an effort to lift his chin. The blurry figure of a man slowly came to him. He recognised this, this position he was in, this view. It was familiar enough to be soothing. His heartbeat, which had been thundering, began to settle at the face he saw there.

"D'ctor?" he groaned and tried to swallow the grit making his mouth feel like sand. "Did... did I fall 'sleep?" That had to be it. He must have drifted off while they were talking.

"No Will," Lecter responded, and for the first time, Will realised that the expression on his friend's face was not one he'd ever seen before. It was serious as ever, but he also looked strangely concentrated, disquieted.

"I feel strange."

"You have been drugged." Lecter said it so perfunctorily, he might have been telling him about the weather. "A mild sedative. It will wear off shortly."

Will brought his surroundings into focus and realised that they were not, as he had initially believed, in Dr Lecter's office. The position of their seats were exactly as they would be in his practice room, but the room was smaller. It was Dr Lecter's drawing room. They were in his house in Baltimore.

He searched his mind for some indication of what had occurred before he woke up there. Where had he been before the darkness swallowed him?

A sudden tingle in his gut brought his memories back to him like a dart hitting bullseye. Of course... he had been at home, locked in his room, going back and forth between his phone and the box containing his hormone suppressing drugs and stimulation aid of choice for heat cycles. He had been securing his nest of pillows and sheets, so that when the heat began he would be able to relax.

"How... How did I get here?" he asked, throat still scratchy.

"I entered your home, using your spare key, and administered the sedative with a syringe. Forgive me Will, it was very discourteous, I know. Particularly given your impending heat."

Tension entered Will's posture as he looked, really looked at Dr Lecter properly. He breathed in through his nose, almost without thinking, and scented the man sitting across from him. The air was thick with Alpha pheromones, the fullness of which he had never tasted before. His body twitched all over in response, his Omega cycle responding.

The slight curve of a smile which appeared at Lecter's mouth indicated that he noticed Will's primal response.

The thinking part of Will burned, shame starting at the tips of his ears and draining downwards. He had never been in the vicinity of an Alpha while his body was undergoing its changes, by his design. Last night had been the first time he'd ever even considered actually mating with an Alpha, his hand straying often to his phone in contemplation of calling Josh, the newly transferred Agent who had been courting him for the past month. The man had been a perfect Gentleman towards him and wholly undemanding, unlike most Alphas, and Will had truly started to believe he might be capable of a real relationship. Maybe even a bonding in the fullness of time.

Truly it had been a bit of an idle fancy, the prospect of mating with an Alpha at last; a fantasy which would help his heat along. He had known in his heart of hearts that he wasn't ready for that.

The overwhelming scent of Hannibal, an Alpha who was clearly actually in rut, proved that. His body was tense, like a breath waiting to be exhaled, his hormones surging.

But everything was still confusing and his head was buzzing. "Why would you do that?" Will asked, plaintively.

"I find that I cannot conceal my nature to you any longer." He ran his finger across his upper lip to remove a line of perspiration gathered there; Will noticed then that his doctor looked quite unkempt, by his usual standards anyway. "It has been a tremendous struggle. Since the moment I met you, smelled you, I have been fighting myself. You call to me in a way I have never experienced before."

Will frowned deeply. He had always known Dr Lecter was an Alpha, and probably a thoroughbred one at that, but had seen nothing to indicate any sort of interest on his side (that was hardly unsurprising, given that he himself was not exactly a pedigree). Well, no interest save that one time he caught his friend scenting him as he approached a heat, but that had been easily shrugged off with a joke about his aftershave. It had seemed fairly meaningless at the time.

"Will, I need you to concentrate very hard on what I am saying. This is all going to be very difficult for you to accept, but it is vital."

Will tried to speak, but coughed instead. "Water?" he gasped, tongue now totally dry.

Lecter moved from his seat with grace, like a panther, and kneeled down beside Will. A glass of water had already been placed on the small table beside him, but his head had been too fuzzy to see it. The Doctor lifted it and tilted it against Will's lips, carefully, almost lovingly.

"Will," he muttered when the water was gone and looked up at him from a strange position of submission, "You have no idea how much I wish I could preserve you, just as you are now. I wish this didn't have to happen." The Doctor turned away from him but didn't make an effort to get off his knees. "But I know now the time has come. You must know the truth."

"Doct..."

"Please Will, call me Hannibal. We are friends, are we not?""

Some of the fuzz started to clear with the water and Will started to realise what was being said. Drugged? He had been drugged. By Dr Lecter - by Hannibal.

He found that had the subsequent presence of mind to try and get to his feet. Strangely, strong arms moved to help him, arms that made his guts twist with want and summoned an unconscious moan from deep down I'm his throat. Too close, the Alpha was too close, but he didn't know how to tell him to back off and let him be alone before he lost control of himself.

"I need to show you something," Hannibal told him.

"What?"

"The truth." Hannibal helped him to move across the darkened room to the slightly ajar door. "I always knew this day would come, but I had not planned for it to happen so soon."

As they reached the threshold, Will's world suddenly titled and spun and he was suddenly in Hannibal's arms, like an actress from the silver screen pulled closer by her hero. Lips which tasted of red wine and cinnamon pressed against his and he unwittingly opened for them. In the back of his mind, Will was screaming at himself to get free and pull away; the saliva of an Alpha in rut was filled with disarming ingredients, designed to trigger his heat and oestrus and prepare him to receive. Yet the sensation of warmth and sense of safety was intoxicating. Beyond the dimmest thought, he had always seen Hannibal as an untouchable thing, controlled and in such possession of his baser urges as to be basically asexual. It was in the back if his mind that the idea of an asexual Alpha was a ridiculous one, and that the good Doctor had to have private outlets for his needs, but he never really thought too far into it. It had seemed like such a moot point anyway, given his lack of interest. Seeming lack if interest.

The man drawing him into this paradise of hot wet tongues was not one he recognised from their time together. He had never suspected such passion, such primal power, such unbridled want, was hidden behind those expensive drycleaned suits and the foppish attention to detail.

"Do you know what it did to me," Hannibal growled into his mouth, a feral creature unleashed at last, "to smell an Alpha touching you, trying to claim you, imprinting on your skin, wanting to fuck you..."

Never, in a thousand years, would Will have suspected that hearing such a normally composed person say the word 'fuck' would be the trigger for his body to start to open up and grow wet inside. He keened at the unexpected sensation.

"Whatever the cost, I couldn't let that go on any further," Hannibal continued before pulling back to look Will in the eyes, in a way he usually couldn't abide. "You are my mate, Will. And you are my redemption. Your purity will cleanse me, just as it will damn me." His voice was growing distant, as though he was talking to himself.

In the throes of a hormone explosion, Will found it hard to track anything that was being said, but he nearly fainted as he felt Hannibal's large hand settle on the curve of his belly, as the therapist confessed, "I have been replacing your fertility control pills with placebos for some time."

"You...?" Will spluttered after a shocked pause, truly floored.

"That is why you became receptive to the advances of an inferior Alpha. That was not my intention, of course."

Before Will could ask for more specifics on what his intentions were, Hannibal guided him through into the dining room.

"And now, no more secrets," he said, almost mournfully.

Will span in, dizzily, and came to a halt at the end of the long table. He froze immediately and his brain struggled to make sense of what was now being presented to him.

The hollowed out corpse of Josh Jones was laid across the table, a bloody tableau. Internal organs had been placed around him on various platters, the cavity of his chest a gaping red hole. What was left of his face was twisted and mangled. His death had been painful and brutal, his body dishonoured and displayed like a bloody jigsaw puzzle, in jagged nonsense pieces.

Will slid to his knees and just stared as Hannibal walked over and stood beside the body on his table, presenting it with his hand.

"I am the Ripper you have been seeking."

Chapter 2

It was as if he had finally woken up. A rush of adrenalin shot through Will's veins and he scrambled unsteadily to the door to the hallway. It was locked.

He clumsily dashed back towards the living room but knocked over a lamp, giving Hannibal enough time to get there first and stand in his way.

Legs giving in again, Will fell back onto his butt and fought to get away, back ending up against the wall. He felt himself shaking as he stared at the man he had thought his friend. His hands squeezed at his hips and pockets, even though he already knew he would not find his gun or his phone. Hannibal watched with an expression that might have been fondness.

"Are you going to kill me?" Will asked, puffing his chest up like a cornered animal.

"I should," Hannibal said, with a dark glint in his eye. "Do not be concerned, that is not my design." He seemed to choose the phrase to mock Will. "Not for you."

Reams of sweat were starting to pour off him and Will knew it wasn't because Hannibal was making him afraid, or because his body was still unsteady from being sedated. He knew the sensation all too well. The heat fever was starting to take grip.

"You bastard," Will growled. "You murdering god damned son of a bitch." He squeezed his eyes together against the beads of sweat at their edges. How could he have not seen who Hannibal really was, all this time? It was supposed to be his job to see through psychopaths and understand them.

But then again, the Chesapeake Ripper was not a psychopath. Or a sociopath. He was a unique construction. Will had always known that was why he couldn't ever see his design clearly.

'What kind of crazy is he?!' Jack Crawford's voice boomed in his mind and juddered his bones.

"Christ, Hannibal," Will brokenly sobbed under his breath. The copper smell of blood burned in his nostrils and he forced himself to look at the dead man on the table. "He didn't deserve..."

"I did not kill him to bring you pain," Hannibal said, quickly. "He was an inferior mate. In the time of our ancestors, it was routine for Alphas to fight to the death for the right to an Omega. I tore his trachea out before he could scream and ripped the heart from his chest. I did this for you."

The softness of Hannibal's expression belied the horror of his words. Will found himself staring at him in shock.

"And there I was sure that you kill people because they are nothing but pigs for slaughter to you."

"Yes, I suppose that is true, and you have eaten at my table many times." Hannibal began to inch closer to him as Will gulped at the thought. "I am a hunter by nature. I kill those who prove themselves inferior, by their words and actions. Although it's true that, on occasion, there are other reasons." He nodded to the tableau that was once an Agent.

"Miriam Lass," Will muttered.

"She was an unfortunate casualty of my instincts for self preservation."

"Do you feel regret?" Will challenged him with sharp daggers for eyes.

Hannibal paused, apparently contemplating his answer. "Yes." He took another step towards Will.

"Stop! Stay back!" he barked. "This is not... I am not going to let you do this. Let me go or you are going to have to kill me."

The murdering cannibal with chiseled lips and soft brown eyes hung back on his words, and tension clung to the air like a soaring bird. He seemed to be assessing the situation carefully. Even in the fever grip of rut, the man looked entirely controlled and calm. It was inhuman the way he still had full command of the situation.

"Will," he hummed, like a litany, "my dearest Will."

"Don't call me that."

"Stop fighting your natural heat responses..."

"You came into my house in the middle of the night and, god, you drugged me!"

"Yes." Hannibal moved closer still and leaned over him.

Will's fist caught the edge of his jaw and clipped his head to one side. It was not enough to stop, or even slow him down. So Will tried again.

Hands that bore the strength of a hunter took possession of his arms and effectively pinned them into his chest as Hannibal dragged him closer. "Shh, relax," he whispered as they came to rest in a tangle against the wall, his back pressed hard against the steel of heated Alpha male chest.

Will struggled, even though he knew he had no real chance of getting free. This was all so wrong. So wrong. "You're insane," he groaned, feeling Hannibal's steady heartbeat reverberating through him, his scent wrapping around him like a blanket, their legs intertwined.

"This is what you were made for," hot breath touched Will's ear, poison trickling in with it. "You can see inside the darkest parts of the human soul. You know killers better than they

know themselves. You already know me in ways no one ever has. We were made to be joined."

Will keened and instantly hated himself. "I will turn you in. Whatever happens. You know I will."

"Yes. It is the price of claiming you."

"I'm not some blushing Omegan virgin bride waiting to be claimed." He had to keep pushing, even if his body was starting to hum. "This is ridiculous."

"No, it is inevitable." Will had relaxed enough for Hannibal to slide his hand downwards to his belly. "Your heat cycles are three days. The BSU are not expecting you back until it has passed. You have already put out enough food and water for your canine friends to survive during your preoccupation. You have nothing to be concerned about."

"You've been stalking me.... planning this..."

"Not at all. I have been avoiding this." Hannibal's tongue lapped at the shell of Will's ear. "I had hoped that, perhaps, in the fullness of time, you would have come to me. But I also knew that I could not hide my nature if that occurred. I am... relieved in some ways."

Will snorted but continued to lean into him, drowsily. "The unit might not miss me but they will miss Agent Jones." He couldn't look at the man on the table anymore but he couldn't forget his macabre presence in the room.

"It hardly matters," Hannibal sighed and shifted Will in his arms so that he would feel the painful hardness he was nursing. The movement caused him to groan.

"I don't want this," Will insisted.

Hannibal's hand slipped downwards still further and he palmed the heat building there. "Perhaps, but you need it." He kissed Will's neck, tenderly. "Your body is opening for me, every part of you seeking this connection. I know your morals haunt you. They are the part if you I would not see broken, even for my benefit. When this is done I will leave you to take whatever action you wish to soothe your conscience."

"You said... you said you replaced my pills. So I'm...?"

"You are." Hannibal breathed in his scent deeply, his lust overwhelming him. His grip was tightening.

"This is sick." Despite himself, hot tears rolled down Will's cheeks, while waves of heat passed over him. "Please stop."

"Do you really want me to stop?" Hannibal turned Will's head and angled his own so their eyes were in alignment.

Will wanted to remain defiant, to pour his hate out through his eyes, but all he could do was look away, ashamed of his desperate urge to surrender. He knew Hannibal had seen it. But he

was not defeated; not yet.

As the Alpha began to pull away, Will allowed him to pull him up to his feet, assessing whether he could run and actually make it. Will decided he should try.

When Hannibal leaned in for another kiss, Will twisted out of his grip and fled. He headed back into the drawing room and from there out into the hallway. The front door had to be locked but he gave it a try anyway.

Footsteps behind him sent him into a flying rush of panic and he was about to flee to the stairs when arms closed around him from behind.

The hand on his neck was compressing his air supply. He kicked his legs back but they were barely strong enough to connect. He felt an odd sense of betrayal as his body gave up against Hannibal's powerful grip and the darkness came to claim him. There was nothing he could do now; it had won.

Chapter 3

Will felt an odd sensation of weightlessness and he heard a succession of creaks, like footsteps on stairs. He felt warmth curled around his body and tried to push away from it, he was so hot already. He felt like he was about ready to combust.

Then he was somewhere cool, being gently laid down on a soft surface. He fought his way back to consciousness and saw wooden posts and gossamer canopies gently swaying in a breeze above him. He looked aside and realised that he was surrounded by cushions on an enormous bed, and the table beside it was laden with fruit and pastries and small bites of meat arranged on china plates. At the foot of the bed, Hannibal was standing, slowly removing his tiepin, collar pins and cufflinks.

For some reason, he found the entire scenario oddly funny and couldn't help but laugh out loud as he came to. Perhaps he had really snapped, he just wasn't sure anymore.

"You're actually serious about this," he said and laughed again. "My god, it's like you Googled all of this."

Will was faintly pleased to see a crease of hurt on Hannibal's forehead.

"You're appealing to my Omega nesting instincts?" Will practically giggled. He felt drunk and boneless. His clothes felt too tight. Some part of him was pleased that all decisions were now out of his hands and that he had nothing to do but to acquiesce. It was easier than fighting. He was so tired of fighting.

"I want you to be comfortable," Hannibal informed him. "You are unmated. This will be more draining on you than you know."

"How do you know I'm unmated?"

"My sense of smell is very precise. Mated Omegas largely take on the scent of their significant bonded mate. It's an interesting quirk of our evolutionary biology, believed to be necessary to the long term bonding process." At some point, Hannibal had divested himself of his tie and unbuttoned his shirt. He removed the latter carefully and folded it. "Although few have honed their senses well enough to tell."

Will drank in the sight of Hannibal's arms and chest, the sinewy muscle tone, the light fur, the scars. It was absolutely not what he ever expected to find under the expensive suits Hannibal lived in. It was the body of someone whose world had not always been softly furnished. When the man turned to place his shirt on the dresser, Will saw several deep lacerations to his shoulders that had healed into white lines. "Who are you really?" he muttered.

"Does it matter?" Hannibal watched Will's face carefully before conceding that perhaps it did. "I have been many things."

"Alright. I want to know, why are you a murderer?"

Hannibal smiled, as if the question had been a great deal more asinine, like being asked to detail his enjoyment of art or his taste in music. "You look into the minds of killers and learn their ways and methods. Perhaps you should tell me."

"Because... because something is missing." The languid hush that had settled over Will was like the meditation he performed, with the swinging pendulum in his mind, that allowed him to unlock the door into the minds of others. "You... lost a great deal when young - perhaps everything - and... death has been your only constant companion. You were not treated well by many when you were not so powerful, and now that you are, you still see people as either food or threat. You never... you never knew anything else then."

Hannibal kneeled at the edge of the bed and slowly unlaced Will's shoes. Although he gave no outward sign of it, Will knew he was listening intently.

"You do not kill for sport or for fun, though you do enjoy the artistry and... forced transformation of those you consider unworthy of life into matter to sustain yours... and the lives of those you do deem worthy."

Will's socks were now gone and Hannibal was leaning over him, helping him out of his jacket and shirt.

"Your rage... is sublimated in this act. It never pours out. You don't lose control... and that is why you are so hard to catch. And..." Will's eyes widened, "you have killed a lot more people than the number known for the Chesapeake Ripper."

That insight granted him a slightly proud smile from the man now laying light kisses across his bare chest.

"The anger you feel is that these pigs live while those you once loved do not... they were killed by pigs... dishonoured... when you could do nothing to prevent it." He paused to gasp as Hannibal's slender fingers unbuttoned his pants and began to liberate his legs from them. But talking was helping. It was keeping his mind occupied and away from the terror that threatened to flare at the thought of what Hannibal wanted from him. "All these acts of murder and... and consuming of the parts... are acts of revenge for something can never be righted. You'll never stop... until you're stopped."

He tensed all over as Hannibal stripped away his boxers; the final fig leaf. It caused his mind to snap back to the present and to his predicament. "Was I right?" He gasped.

Hannibal looked up at him and grinned with a feral abandon. "Sometimes, I'm merely hungry," he said, with amusement. Then he traced his tongue along Will's erection and finally swallowed it whole.

Might have known a cannibal would be good with his mouth. An ominous note of hysteria was sounding through Will's thoughts now. He was afraid, deathly afraid of what this man was capable of, even while his primal senses were betraying him, feeling very pleased and excited by the attention of a strong, virile Alpha. Years of fighting a bitter feud with that part of his psyche had, he thought, dulled its power over him. "Ohh oh yesss," it said, arresting his vocal chords as he crested with pleasure, and Will knew he was lost forever.

His fingers idly stroked into Hannibal's hair, the rhythm of heat and wet dragging over his engorged flesh taking over his mind. It was good, so good. The slow emergence of a brand new, strange new world, where everything was allowed and he was free to embrace his heat, his natural desire for a mate, and all the terrible pieces of his fragmented self, nearly drove him right to the brink.

Then Hannibal was at his mouth, his kisses wild and bruising, the rush of pacifying hormones being produced in his saliva answering the rush of slickness inside Will.

He frowned and growled when he realised that Hannibal was still wearing his pants and feebly tugged at them, needing what was inside. When his mate pulled away to stand up and remove the final layers of his clothing, Will actually whined in his throat, desperately.

"Will, are you ready?" Hannibal asked, thickly, more affected than he had ever been in Will's presence.

In answer, he turned onto his forearms and knees and presented himself. "Please," he groaned, on fire. This drug-free wild heat was more powerful than any he had known in his life.

With a dip of the bed and a careful movement, Hannibal was pressing inside him, and Will almost couldn't believe he had ever denied himself this feeling of completeness. He braced himself against the headboard, face pressed into a cushion, and gasped at the twin sensations of pain and pleasure being dragged out if him. It was so deep he felt hollowed out every time his mate pulled back, and full to bursting with every push forward. And as the rhythm and the pressure slowly built in speed, he cried out as he felt teeth sink into the apex of his shoulder.

It was a act of claiming, he knew. This was not a game to Hannibal, he fully intended to initiate a blood bond. But Will had no ability to protest, or any sense left to speak out, so he greeted it with a shudder and pushed back into Hannibal. Sweat came onto his skin in beads; he was at full flush.

"Will, my sweet Will," Hannibal gasped, breathlessly. "Open for me."

With a start, Will realised that Hannibal was now pushing harder, slowly sliding the partly inflated knot that only appeared in rut past the guardian ring of muscle. The pressure built and then it finally went where it needed to go, immediately slamming right into Will's prostate gland and unexpectedly triggering his orgasm.

He cried out ecstatically, gripping hard into the sheets. The knot swelled and pressed in forever harder, forcing out everything he had. He soon felt Hannibal stiffen, a faint animal growl coming from somewhere far inside his chest, and his insides were flooded. He felt utterly conquered, but beautifully so.

Will couldn't hold them up anymore. His forearms gave way and they both slid down to the mattress. Hannibal held tightly into him, panting, and rolled them onto their sides so they could settle into a comfortable position for the time it would now take for his knot to release his partner, his orgasm simmering and peaking repeatedly to ensure successful breeding. He

lapped lightly at the bite mark he had made on the white flesh of Will's shoulder, both enjoying its coppery flavour and apologising for it.

They lay for some time in silence, sweat cooling on their skin. Only when Hannibal groaned and his hips swayed for his second release of seed, did Will finally make a sound.

"How long?" he asked, sadness tinging the edge of his voice now that he was starting to wake up and break free from the demands of his body.

In response, Hannibal pulled him closer and tightened his arms. "Forever," he whispered into his ear and kissed into the nape of his neck.

Will squeezed his eyes shut, knowing he was right. Even if he broke free, called Jack, brought Hannibal Lecter to the justice his victims deserved, he would never escape him now. They were bonded.

Chapter 4

In the nightmare places he inhabited, Will was never really alone. Not anymore. The strange stag, with its staring eyes and black raven feathers, had been following him for so long he hardly remembered a time when it wasn't there.

He was in a deep dense forest, in the dead of night, but the sun was still somehow burning above and melting him from the inside out. He was trying to find his way out, but the weeds and underbrush were clinging to his legs and feet, holding him against his will. The forest was on fire, molten leaves floating around him like ashes. A storm was coming and he knew that nothing in its path would survive.

The stag was there, walking through it all without a care. It saw him and paused, those dark eyes staring, calculating. Then it slowly came to him. Will couldn't recall ever being face to face with it before. It had only ever been at a distance, watching him or behind him, guiding him. Now, almost nose to nose, he saw that it was a beautiful but indisputably fearsome creature, blacker than the night and strong, very strong; as unfathomable as the deep ocean. Its nose touched his cheek and it was cold and wet and soothing. Will hesitantly ran his hand across its neck, feeling the soft edge of its feathers against his fingertips.

It took a step back, leaving him momentarily bereft, and then its front legs bent into a kneel, proud head with antlers adorned bowed to the ground. Will knew it was inviting him onto its back.

The fire was everywhere, searing, intense. He knew had to get away. Will climbed up onto the stag's back and held on tightly as it leap back to its feet and took off, carrying him away from the fire, away to the safety of whatever was beyond. His heart was thumping wildly as they practically flew through the forest, which was being incinerated behind them. And when the fire and trees began to recede into the distance behind them, Will looked for some sign of where they were going. He saw only the blackness at the edge of the world looming closer like a cliff, like death.
He came to with a strangled gasp that felt like an electric shock.

"Will," Hannibal's voice was right next to him, and he realised that he was standing in the hallway. He had been wrapped in a blanket, which was being held in place by Hannibal. 'You were sleep walking.'

In a sudden moment of waking clarity, he knew at last that the stag was his mind's representation of Hannibal. It always had been. And he had always known who he really was. It was the monster who sought to drag him down into his dark world under the pretext of saving his soul, just as Hannibal had used the pretence of therapy sessions to find his way into his mind, guiding him into accepting his trust and friendship, and finally, his knot. Will immediately tried to pull away, not yet fully awake but reacting viscerally.

Will pulled and pushed his way out of Hannibal's grip, the blanket left behind as he stumbled unsteadily along the hallway to the stairs. Hannibal was immediately behind him, attempting

to hold him, but he was on the stairs already and knew that he had to get free. It felt like running back towards the fire, his legs still tangled in weeds, everything he touched burning his skin. He missed his step on the fourth one down and tumbled the rest of the way, landing at the bottom in a naked heap.

Something had given way in his ankle, he knew it, and he was pretty sure he had caught his head on the corner of something, but didn't have time to check for sure. Hannibal was descending the steps, the light behind him, making him huge and imposing. Will blinked and in his place was the stag, still watching him, curious and intent. Will clawed his way to his feet, though he couldn't put more than a tiny amount of weight on one side, scurrying without any thought as to a plan, a rabbit with a hound at its heels.

The front door would be locked, he knew that it was not an option at this point. Hannibal would be there in moment, he needed something to defend himself with. Will hobbled through doorways, shaking and dripping with sweat, not entirely sure where he was going in the twilight gloom. Somehow, he made it to the kitchen. He flipped on the lights, and recoiled as they burned his eyes. He knew he had only seconds, and no idea of where everything was kept, so he went to the sink. There were cutting boards and knives placed at the bottom of it, waiting for their owner's attention.

"Will?" Hannibal's voice drifted from the doorway. 'Calm yourself, you were having a nightmare.'

"No I wasn't. I'm living one." He kept his back turned to his kidnapper, trying to assess where he was the way he had been trained in the Academy all those years ago. He could actually see the droplets of perspiration falling from him, his body caught in an excited state of fever beyond any he had known before, thanks to the poison of Hannibal's influence.

"You've hurt yourself."

Hannibal was drawing closer. He could practically taste him. But Will remained steady, waiting for his chance.

"May I see?'

Will darted his hand into the sink to retrieve his weapon and span around on the foot that was still functional. Hannibal half deflected his motion, but not quickly enough to avoid it entirely. The knife buried itself into his side and he hissed with pain, stepping back.

Although he had, for the moment, stopped Hannibal's approach as he intended, a flood of regret erupted within him the moment he saw the hurt flash across Hannibal's brown eyes and blood bloom on the fabric of his dressing gown. It went against all logic, but there it was. He almost found himself reaching out to him to apologise, but managed to stay still, pinned against the sideboard.

"There's ice in my freezer,' Hannibal told him, unexpectedly, only a slight crack in his voice betraying any sort of injury. "I suggest you use it to try to cool yourself, you're extremely feverish. It's not unheard of for an Omega to experience such a reaction to their first

successful bonding. Your body is struggling to adjust to the suffusion of new genetic material. It will pass soon if you rest."

Hannibal grunted as he pulled the knife, which had somehow diminished from the carving scythe he had chosen to something no bigger than a potato knife, from his side. Will flinched as Hannibal moved towards him, knife in hand, half closing his eyes in anticipation of pain. When it clattered into the sink behind him, he still jumped.

Then he was alone in the kitchen. He listened intently at the receding footsteps and tried to place where Hannibal was in the house. He decided that he had gone into the downstairs bathroom across the hallway.

He hobbled, painfully, to the fridge-freezer and took out a bag of ice, hugging it to himself like a favourite toy. In the stainless steel reflection of the kettle, he saw that he had blood on his forehead and a bright gash to the temple. He looked down at his ankle and could tell that it was already swelling. He kicked himself for his idiocy in panicking like that. Now there really was no escape.

He stared at his bulbous silver reflection longer, trying to recognise himself. He had hardly noticed that he was naked before, but now he could see everything clearly; his red lips, flushed cheeks, the fingermarks bruised onto his neck, the bitemark on the back of his shoulder. He was suddenly aware of stickiness between his thighs and on his legs. Debauched, was the word that came to his mind, summoning a primitive note of giddiness in his chest.

This was not the bookish, semi-autistic loner who taught classes on the criminally insane and turned to canines for some semblance of the companionship he craved. He was changed now. Claimed, by a powerful hunter Alpha, his very cells humming with the fever of his transformation. Truly he had never thought this would happen to him and he couldn't help the private sense of triumph, despite the note of horror he felt at his acquiescence and complicity in letting a serial killer mate him.

Will dropped the ice in the sink and slowly returned the way he came, specifically avoiding the dining room, knowing the corpse of Hannibal's rival must still be there. He clung to the walls and any furniture he could to avoid putting any weight on it.

A light was on in the hall and it allowed him to see the faint trail of blood spots leading across to the bathroom. Will had fully intended to go back upstairs and find some clothes, but for some reason, he followed the trail instead.

The door had been left ajar and he saw Hannibal hunched over in front of the large mirror, under a very bright white light, tending to his wound. His dressing gown was pooled on the floor, leaving him in boxers. Bloodied antiseptic pads and cotton buds were discarded in the sink around a first aid box. Will drew closer and watched the former surgeon sewing his own flash closed, one, then two stitches. Hannibal saw him in the mirror but didn't react in any way, focused on dressing the closed wound.

"Is it, um, serious?" Will asked, slumping against the doorframe, tiredly.

There was no reaction. He was about to ask again, when Hannibal turned and swept him up into his arms, as if he weighed nothing. Suddenly, he was on the back of his stag again, swept away from an imaginary fire, into the arms of darkness itself.

Hannibal carried him back up the stairs like a bride and returned them to his bedroom. After gently depositing Will on the rocking chair in the corner, Hannibal retreated to the en suite and Will heard water running.

It was disconcerting, the way Hannibal was now so silent. He wasn't used to it. Hannibal, whose lilting voice and carefully chosen words had been his mask of sanity the whole time Will had known him, was that much more intimidating now that he wasn't hiding behind them.

He returned and kneeled before Will to inspect his ankle. Some light touches seemed to convince him that nothing was broken.

"I twisted it on the stairs," Will offered, unnecessarily. "I think it's sprained."

And again, he was being lifted in the air. Hannibal carried him into the bathroom and stood him up in the large iron and porcelain bath he was running. Will watched, confused as Hannibal stripped his underwear away. His intentions became clear when he stepped in behind Will and carefully bore his weight as they sunk into the water together.

The tub was large enough for a close tangle of two bodies, and the water cool enough to bring some relief to Will and lessen the extreme heat pouring off his skin. Hannibal remained silent as he palmed a sponge and used it to clean and soothe his mate.

At first, Will was naturally tense. It made no sense to go from running and then stabbing someone, to enjoying an intimate bath together.

"Why?" he asked, deciding to get to the point. "I tried to kill you."

A barrage of water was squeezed against his scalp, making him practically purr. "There were four knives in the sink, including a solid silver steak knife. You chose a two and a half inch potato peeler. You pushed it into my side, rather than my neck. You were not trying to kill me."

Will let his head fall back against Hannibal's shoulder with a deep sigh. He had been very serious at the time and didn't really know why he had sabotaged what might have been his final chance to escape.

The cool water ebbed into his bones and, at last, some of the heat began to dissipate. His body melded against Hannibal's as though built for that purpose and he couldn't help but relax.

A clock in the corner chimed 5am and Will was starting to fall asleep again.

Later, he would only vaguely recall Hannibal drying him off and putting him back to bed, where he finally slept soundly for the first time in weeks.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Warning for a slight rewriting of the canon history of Hannibal Lecter to bring the timeline into sync with the modern setting of the show.

"Who was the first person you killed?"

Will's eyes were glassy and unseeing in the dim room as his body was languidly rocked back and forth, back and forth: Hannibal, beneath him on the old rocking chair, absently gentle, one hand on Will's hip, the other raining delicate brushes against the fuzz of Will's lower belly. He was silent. Whatever Will said, or asked now, he seemed distant to.

"What was your father's name?"

The room smelled of peaches, clementines and the musk of their combined scents. The light had been restricted to one orange lamp in the corner, near but not right beside the lightly creaking piece of furniture bearing their weight.

"Where were you born?"

Hannibal tensed and pressed his forehead to Will's back, coming for a third or forth time, while Will only returned from his trance briefly to groan at the pressure and sensation.

Everything was hurting. Physically, he was wrung out inside and out. His panicked escape attempt in the early hours of the morning bore marks all over his skin already. The cut to his temple was an angry shade of red and the apple of his cheek was bruising, his ankle now a mess. Emotionally he was on turbulent waters, even if on the outside he was feeling soothed and languid.

"Do you cry?"

He knew that Hannibal was in pain too. No real damage had been done by the knife Will stuck into him but he could tell that the wound was hurting him all the same.

"What would you like to call the child?"

The motion of the rocking chair slowed as Hannibal's foot, its rudder, paused. "Michaela," he said, plainly. Then the rocking continued.

His voice actually startled Will. He hadn't heard Hannibal say anything for hours. His endless questions were his way of filling the gap in discourse that had continued even as Hannibal

had fed him though the day with all the fruits and sweets he had prepared, playing the role of a courting Alpha to perfection (though Will naturally refused the meat).

He let his head fall back a little onto Hannibal's shoulder, sweat damp curls tickling the man's cheek, eager to keep the conversation going now it had returned. "And for a boy?"

Again there was silence and Will thought the cause lost. Then, "William Junior."

An unbidden chuckle escaped Will at the absurdity. "If we are handing down names, why not Hannah? It's close to Hannibal."

Hannibal's hands roamed down Will's thighs and, with a groan, he gently lifted him and eased his diminishing knot out. Panting, Will tensed, his primal self commanding him to do everything possible to keep his mate's seed from escaping.

Hannibal pulled the blanket which was draped on the side of the chair up and over them both, drawing it close at the sides to cocoon them in a lazy huddle. Will relaxed as he felt Hannibal place light kisses to his temple.

He hadn't realised he had been waiting for forgiveness for stabbing Hannibal, but he felt his mood lift, the turbulent ocean of his mind calming at last. It was perverse, he knew. Will wanted to claim captor bonding was at work, or that years of isolation and loneliness had made him an easy target. In truth he didn't know what had happened between fighting to escape in the morning and letting Hannibal silently coax him into this gentle, languid second mating by dusk. Perhaps the blood bond had taken. He just didn't know. Really all he knew was that somehow, here, in the arms of a brutal killer, he was at home.

"The name Michaela is the English form of a name with great meaning to me," Hannibal breathed. "You have asked me many questions today. Mischa is the answer to many of them."

Will curled his hand into Hannibal's underneath the blanket and felt the long fingers tighten around then. He could sense that he had unlocked something. In acknowledging the child, their child, he had in a way accepted his part in the creation of what Hannibal seemed to desperately want. That in turn had removed a barrier that he hadn't even realised was still waiting to be breached.

"I was born near Kernave, in Lithuania," Hannibal began, and Will realised that every question he had asked had not been ignored. Merely, the answers delayed. "My father's name was also Hannibal. The seventh in our line to bear the name. He was a Count, the head of an ancient and noble family. My mother was an Italian of the Visconti line whom he met while studying abroad. Father was a leading figure in the movement for Lithuanian independence which followed the war. He believed the wealth of our family, and our name, would protect him from the Red Army. It did not. I was seven when he was taken. My mother joined the movement in an effort to free him from the prisons. In time, she too was arrested. We were reunited in a labour camp in Siberia, taken as political prisoners. It was here that my sister, Mischa, was born. The winters were hard and food often scarce. We were not well liked by the other prisoners because of our former wealth. The soviet guards were cruel; men who had disgraced themselves in duty elsewhere and were sent there to be put out of the way. They were almost as trapped as we. One particularly hard month, with supplies blocked by extreme

snow fall, a camp uprising occurred. My parents were fingered by the other prisoners and so therefore held responsible. They were shot dead. The guards appeared to take pity on Mischa and I, bringing us into their quarters, allowing us to eat with them. I learned the madness that hunger drives in men quickly when their meat dwindled. The camp commander, Vladis Grutas, slaughtered my sister for a broth. I ate it with them before I knew. The shock of discovering her baby teeth at the bottom of my bowl rendered me mute for many years."

Will had been trying not to make a sound, but he just couldn't help but gasp. There was no ceremony to Hannibal's words; Will knew that he was not sharing experiences to excuse or explain his actions as an adult. He just wanted Will to know.

"I knew my days were numbered if I remained in their company, so I ran and found my way into the forest around the camp. Though it took a long time, and I experienced many hardships, I eventually found my way back to Lithuania. My Uncle took me in and sent me to a boarding school in France. There, I was taught to draw as a means of expression, before I found my voice again. At sixteen, upon my return to Lithuania, my Uncle formally adopted me. By then, I was burning with a desire for revenge. I was young and angry. And so the first person I killed was Vladis Grutas. Then I killed every one of those men and ate their hearts."

Hannibal breathed in deeply and slowly exhaled, his confession hanging heavily over him.

"Was that all the answers to my questions?" Will asked, lightly, no idea of what to really say.

The hand which he had placed into Hannibal's was lifted and guided out of the blanket. His palm was tilted and pressed to Hannibal's cheek. His fingers found the wetness of freely shed tears there.

"That, I believe, answers the final one."

Will slowly turned his hand to hold Hannibal's again and brought it to his lips to kiss it, trying to convey how sorry he was for the traumatised and alone child Hannibal had once been.

They descended into a thoughtful silence. Will still wanted to hate Hannibal, on behalf of the innocent lives he had destroyed, on behalf of Agent Jones, and Miriam Lass, and for the Will who had not wanted this bonding at all. But he couldn't truthfully manage it in that moment.

All he could do was make a faithful promise, to himself, to do what was right when the time came, regardless of what he was feeling.

"Your scent has changed," Hannibal whispered, his voice smiling at last.

The hot tears of overwhelmed emotions were on Will's cheeks now.

Chapter 6

On his third day of heat, Will couldn't stop staring at Hannibal; when he showered, when he brought fresh food on silver trays, when he read stories from his homeland to Will out of dusty old books. He was memorising every angle of his face, his hands, his mannerisms, absorbing the feeling of being bonded and fully contented for the first time in his generally miserable life. It wouldn't be long before everything would have to change so it seemed important somehow.

Already the heat was starting to dissipate. His mind was clearing. But as he watched Hannibal through the day, the more the need was growing.

This time, this final time, it would be on his terms.

He got the man's attention by placing a hand on his cheek and gazing into his eyes, dreamily. He guided Hannibal into a languid clash of tongues and exchange of hormones.

"I want you, Hannibal," he groaned, and saw the most marvelous thing; it was as if the light turned on behind Hannibal's eyes for the first time. Those eyes that had seen so much horror and blood had not, he guessed, seen someone ever look at him with genuine desire. "Make love to me?"

Hannibal responded with a powerful kiss. "You already carry my child," he said, breathily. It had been professed as an Alpha thing that he could tell from scent alone, though Will half expected that it was more of a Hannibal thing. "You don't need to..."

"I want to."

A low rumble sounded in the basest corner of Hannibal's chest, a deep growl, and sent a thrill through Will. His insides twisted pleasantly, warm and wet.

It seemed to be a kink of Hannibal's for Will to wear his shirts, even the formal ones, as bed wear. He lay back and let Hannibal unbutton the over-white too-big dress shirt with the double buttoning at the collar and sleeves, every button popped revealing a little more skin.

But this wasn't Hannibal's game this time. Will had a design of his own. He pushed him away and rolled them so he could sit atop his mate, straddling him, able to take command and undress him bit by bit in return.

Will swallowed hard at the sight of Hannibal vibrating under his touch, his bulge nudging at him through thin fabric. "Will," Hannibal sighed, like he was uttering a litany. "You have no idea..." His words were halted as Will wiggled into a better position above him and he never managed to complete his sentence. He was fighting to control himself and remain gentle, Will could tell. It made him more determined to reward his restraint.

He kissed the scarred and sinewy muscle of Hannibal's chest, moving downwards, lingering over the coppery taste of the stitched up knife wound that he had put there. That seemed to

trigger a jolt of pain, or pleasure, or both; Hannibal hissing and arching his back.

Will continued his descent, figuratively and literally, and stripped away the pants and boxers obstructing him. The hard and heavy shaft that lay within was throbbing for him, every bit as powerful and intimidating as its owner. Will took a moment to lick his lips and look Hannibal directly in the eyes, the way he had not been able to before this liberation. He then drew the head into his mouth to taste him at last.

The words which Hannibal growled as he clung to the sheets and rotated his hips were not English. But Will kept his ministrations light and fleeting, preferring to torment rather than pleasure.

Giddy with this newfound power, Will let Hannibal's need fall to his belly so he could explore every inch of his mate's body. He wanted to take his time mapping it out, learning every curve and line, but his own need was growing unbearable. His whole body was thrumming and singing with the taste and scent of his mate.

"Tell me," he gasped, moving himself into position over Hannibal, the shirt hanging off his shoulders now, "what you are feeling. I want to know."

Hannibal, breathing heavily, seemed to consider the question very seriously. "Awe," he said, finally, and threw his head back at the sensation of Will sinking down into him.

"Awe?" He began to move and was rewarded with the beautiful gift of Hannibal coming apart for him.

"I want to... chain you to me... watch you swell with my child... want to mark your skin with my touch... kill anyone who looks at you. Oh.... oh Will..." His hands gripped into Will's hips, possessive and strong.

Will was panting, dragging his own pleasure out with his hand in time with his hip movements. The words, they were speaking directly to the liberated Omega part of his brain, stimulating his pleasure more than mere touch ever could.

"... want to cut out my heart and let it sustain you... our child... Want to keep you here forever..."

With a strangled cry, Will came, his essence tattooing across Hannibal's chest. There it was eagerly gathered and drank from Hannibal's fingers with relish, wearing the same expression Will had seen before in honour of a fine meal or a vintage wine.

The aftershocks grew electric as he was flipped onto the other side of the bed and pressed down, Hannibal covering him like a blanket, his animal need taking him over. Will gasped into the pillow as Hannibal pressed inside him again, each thrust pushing his knot nearer to its home until, at last, it was in place and Hannibal's seed was pulsing into him.

As he had the first time, Hannibal held onto Will and guided them into a comfortable tangle on their sides. One hand pressed protectively over Will's lower belly, lips resting against the join of his neck and shoulder, the other clung to his chest.

"Will, we could be together, always."

The reminder was an unwelcome intrusion to the moment. "Don't. Please."

"Keep my secrets. Stay with me."

Will pressed his eyes closed and felt as he had in his nightmare, riding the stag towards a cliff of darkness. He had woken before letting it take him over the edge then. He knew it would take everything left in him to do the same now.

"Stay with you, watch you kill and maim and torture, pretend I can live with myself?"

"You can. I know it is within you. You can absorb the darkness of others. Become mine." His voice was the devil on Will's shoulder, though it was tinged with desperation. "I will give you everything."

"No Hannibal." They were still joined, the hot seed of the forbidden apple bulging his insides. Their bond would never fade. But that lingering conscience was the final inch of Will Graham and he couldn't let Hannibal have it. "No."

Hannibal buried his face into the curls of Will's hair, breathing them in, apparently resigned. His arms clung that much tighter to Will, and Will held on in return.

Tomorrow, everything would change. Daylight would pierce the curtains and the reality of who they were would reassert, this joining nothing more than a memory, a scar that would mark both them both forever. This time was all they had now.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Something cold touched his ankle and it disturbed Will from his slumber. His eyelids fluttered open to discover Hannibal fixing a cuff and chain around the sprained mess of bruises.

His heart dropped. Had Hannibal decided to keep him there, despite his wishes? Will knew the man was more than capable of it, keeping him a bound, barefoot and pregnant prisoner.

Hannibal tested the chain and found it strong. He then turned to Will with dead eyes, that calm and fathomable creature that commanded him back in its throne. "Your clothes are on the rocking chair. I have torn them in places."

Will frowned, not sure what to make of what he was seeing. The bed depressed with Hannibal's weight as he sat down beside him. A syringe appeared in his hand and Will watched, tense, as he squirted some of the viscous fluid out to rid it of air bubbles.

"Will, this is very important," he said, almost looking through him. "They will try to drug you, to persuade you, to reason with you to destroy what we have made. You must not let them."

It took him a further moment to understand. Of course, Hannibal was staging a scene; a rape scene. "What's that?" he asked groggily.

"A mild sedative. Nothing that will harm you or your child. I trust you will not begrudge me a few hours grace before setting the wolves on me. It is also better if they find this in your blood."

Hannibal pulled a phone out of his pocket and put it onto the nightstand where previously he had put all of the food and drink he'd made to sustain them through their bonding, all now gone. It was easily within reach of Will, who stared at him, stunned.

He didn't protest the injection, which made him instantly sleepy again, his heart slowing.

"You were worth my freedom," Hannibal said, and leaned over to kiss him one final time, putting all his hurt and want for a different life into it.

The last thing Will felt before he returned to slumber and dreams was Hannibal's sincere kiss and inaudible whisper into his belly.

*

It was just as Hannibal had said it would be. His pained and brief call to Jack Crawford unleashed the very hounds of hell on the sleepy neighbourhood where the Lecter House of Horrors stood.

He fought to stay lucid and in control throughout, refusing to countenance any looks of pity or accept any medical attention whatsoever. That morning had seen the birth of a feral Will, a cornered animal with something to fight for.

Everyone assumed, as Hannibal intended, that he had been the victim of imprisonment and rape. His body had enough visible cuts and bruises to make that very plausible, though he wouldn't let anyone near him with a rape kit or even a needle to make the consensus conclusive.

Crawford kept everybody at bay in the hospital, staring anyone who dared to be in the vicinity down with his angry gaze. The pretty brunette nurse who was tending to Will's wounds jumped as he strode into the checkup room, voice booming at her to take a break. She gave him a defiant glare, and Will privately thought 'good for you'.

"Call me if you need anything," she said to him, meaningfully, before leaving them alone.

Jack slumped. He looked like he'd sprouted a few grey hairs between walking into that bedroom behind the SWAT team in the early hours and coming to the hospital through a media scrum. "We found Agent Jones," he told him, "and some preserved parts of Miriam Lass, amongst others. Was he...?"

"The Chesapeake Ripper? Yes."

Jack nodded. He had already known, just didn't want to believe it. "I don't even know what to say."

"Have they found Ha... Lecter yet?"

"No but the alert is out. His vehicle is being sought across three counties. His face is already all over the news. He won't get far."

Will closed his eyes, remembering the resignation with which Hannibal had held him through his final rut. He had known that the full might of the FBI would gather to hit him the moment his identity was known. There was nowhere he could hide, not really, and no way to escape abroad unseen.

"They tell me you're refusing to be checked out," Jack said, his authority and weight of expression exactly that of an older Alpha. "You... smell of him...."

"Don't," he snapped. "You'll get him on murder charges. You don't need anything else. Freddie Lounds is probably already telling the world some lurid stories about what happened."

Crawford sat down in the chair beside Will's bed, pinching the skin between his eyebrows wearily. "There are going to be a lot of questions. The bureau are going to want to know everything he said and did. Everything. I can't protect you."

Will glared at him. "I'm a suspect?"

"Let them take the tests."

It was probably meant to be friendly advice, but to Will it was like a slap on the face. He fisted the white cotton sheets of the bed he had perched on the side of, trying to exorcise his anger that way in order to avoid punching his boss in the face.

"Look, see from their perspective. The Chesapeake Ripper has no history of sexual violence. Not a single one of his victims were touched. Now you..."

"We knew each other. I don't think he knew his victims beyond casual encounters. He wanted me for a mate, not a meal. I guess he cared for me in his own twisted way."

The eyes which burned into his skin were hard and unyielding. "Did you care for him?"

Will bit his lip and squirmed. "He was my friend... supposed to be." In the back of his mind, he knew had to put in a performance, whatever his true feelings were (and he wasn't really sure anyway). "He drugged me in the middle of the night, murdered an innocent man for the crime of liking me, took me by force specifically during my heat cycle... I tried to escape, twice. The first time he choked me unconscious. The second time, I stabbed him with the first knife I could find." It was strange how easy it was to build small tidbits of truth into believable half-truths. "For god's sake Jack, he chained me up... injected me with sedatives. Do you honestly believe I was complicit?"

Jack considered his words and then dropped his head. "No. But at the very least, did he say anything that might give us a clue as to where he was going?"

"I've been trying to think of something that could help. He just took off in the middle of the night."

"Leaving you a phone."

"Apparently."

Years of experience and a natural intuition were clearing setting Jack's mind at war with itself. Will could see the battle lines being drawn between the Jack who believed him and the Jack who knew that something was not quite right here. Eventually, he had to call it quits and decide to fight over the details later.

The brunette nurse was back, tapping her heel by the door. "If you don't mind, I really need to take a blood test now."

Crawford seemed to consider bellowing something until she left but didn't have a good reason to stay. "I'll be back later," he promised, and strode out.

"Alphas," the nurse tutted and came at Will with the needle. She paused as he flinched. "Not a fan of needles?"

"No I... look," he read her nametag, blearily, "Molly, I don't want to go through all the intimate tests. I don't want any drugs, no morning-after pills, nothing. I just want to be left alone and to go feed my dogs."

She smiled and he realised that she was really quite pretty. "That's your call, but a blood test should confirm that part about being drugged, which sounds like it'll be useful in backing up your side of the story."

His ears burned. "You were listening?"

"This is my ward. I get to listen where I want to." She held up the needle, her expression a question mark.

Will slowly uncurled his arm and let her tap the inner belly of it for a vein. A blood sample was swiftly and efficiently taken. She had it taped up in seconds.

"They say that a blood bond can play all sorts of tricks on the mind. It makes people do really absurd things," she remarked, casually. There was a lot of intelligence and understanding behind her blue eyes, he could tell. "The rape kit would just confirm any DNA samples left behind, it wouldn't tell them if things were consensual or not. That would require a physical exam, which you don't have to give consent to. I could just take the swabs and then tick the boxes to get the heat off you?"

He didn't entirely know what to say. It made a certain amount of sense; a small exam to show willing without having to submit to an invasive procedure. Will coyly looked away and nodded.

"Okay, I can make it quick as a flash. Just let me go get the kit."

"Thank you, Molly."

She smiled, warmly, as she left the room, and Will had to fight back tears, though he had no idea why.

*

His welcome home wasn't quite the enthusastic one he had been anticipating. His dogs gathered around him but seem quizical and uncertain, rather than excited to see him. Will realised they were confused by his change of scent. Not enough for them to growl or back away, thankfully, but enough to cause a lot of circling and sniffing at his legs.

Perhaps because they had known Hannibal quite well too, he wasn't unfamiliar. The thought should have disturbed him a lot more than it did.

He set about the task of cleaning the empty bowls of food and water and refilling them. The cold sausages he'd picked up on the way home went down a treat as well.

Will wandered to his room, intending to take a shower and get changed, but found himself frozen at the sight of his bed, all made up with pillows, prepared to see him through the heat he should have had in solitude and privacy. A sudden thought struck him and open the box on the nightstand to check his bottle of fertility pills.

He dropped a few into the palm of his hand and peered at them. There was no way to tell if they were real or if Hannibal had really replaced them. Will supposed he would just have to

trust his instincts. He just knew with a certainty that belied the situation that he really was mated and pregnant. There was no doubt in his mind.

Will opened his fridge and stared at the beers he'd left in there when life was a hundred shades of different. He let his fingers dance over them but picked out a bottle of water instead. It was like a private acknowledgement.

He went into his living room to settle down with his dogs and take stock of his thoughts. Without really thinking things through, he turned on his TV and immediately regretted it as Hannibal's face almost immediately popped up on the newscast.

The legend along the bottom said, simply, "Serial Killer Captured".

Will turned it off again. He had already known that; the guards put on to stand at his door, allegedly in case Hannibal came after him again, or possibly because they suspected he might make contact with him as an accomplice, had been called off and sent home the moment it was confirmed. His house was isolated enough for him to feel safe from the media so he didn't protest it.

Tonight might be the last night he had with any semblance of normalicy. Tomorrow there would be a lot of questions and he knew that, whatever he said or did, aspersions would be cast. Even if his colleagues believed him, the media would write its own story.

"I did the right thing," he told Winston and scratched behind the mutt's ears.

Whatever happened now, that could not be taken away from him.

Chapter End Notes

Part 2 is up here: Toccata and Fugue (Adagio)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!